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UNITED STATES.

No yellow fever in New Orleans.

No additional cases of yellow fever have been reported from New Orleans since the 1 reported May 30. The president of the Louisiana State board of health telegraphed, June 8, that the State of Texas had raised its quarantine against freight from New Orleans.

DISINFECTION OF BAGGAGE OF RETURNING TROOPS.

Savannah quarantine.

As stated in PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS for May 19, 1898, page 714, all baggage of troops returning from Cuba after March 1 was required to be disinfected previous to entry into the United States. P. A. Surg. A. C. Smith was in charge of this work at the Savannah quarantine station, and he reports as follows:

NORFOLK, VA., *May 29, 1899.*

SIR: As directed in Bureau letters (P. M. C.) of the 12th instant, I have the honor to report upon my work at Savannah, Ga., in connection with the returning troops from Cuba.

In obedience to telegraphic orders received March 22, 1899, I left Norfolk for Savannah the same evening, arriving the following afternoon and meeting P. A. Surg. J. O. Cobb, who was in charge of the operations of the Service at Savannah, and Asst. Surg. M. H. Foster. Early the following morning we went together by one of the tugboats in the service of the Army Quartermasters Department, to the quarantine station, which is situated about 11 miles down the Savannah River and about 3 miles above Tybee Island, on the right bank of the river and directly on the channel.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Cobb had been on the ground only one day before me. Assistant Surgeon Foster had been engaged several days, under general orders, to assist the depot quartermaster, Col. J. B. Beltinger, United States Army, and the local quarantine officer, Dr. W. J. Linley, and he had worked out and organized a considerable part of the scheme for the disinfection of the baggage and effects of the soldiers.

The work which was presented to us to do was of great magnitude, and unusual in character or even without precedent. Large numbers of volunteer troops, imperfectly disciplined, were to be brought into the country as rapidly as possible, through a Southern port, at the beginning of the warm season, from one of the most dangerously infected spots in the world. The task was undertaken without any special preparations having been made in advance and without any appliances beyond those used in ordinary maritime quarantine. The result was gratifying by reason of its success, and the comparatively small amount of discomfort suffered by those against whom quarantine measures had to be enforced.

The equipment of the Savannah station was in many ways well adapted to the work. A wharf 400 feet long was directly on the river channel, with sufficient depth of water beside it to accommodate all the river craft and even small-sized steamships. A bridge about 100 feet long connected the wharf with firm ground and brought it into immediate communication with the disinfecting house, in which there was a steam disinfecting cylinder 30 feet long by 8 feet in diameter. The cylinder was fitted with racks hung to three trucks running on an overhanging track, besides which the floor of the cylinder could be used for bulky articles in case of necessity. Beside the disinfecting house was a plot of sandy ground about 100 feet broad by 300 feet deep. This plot of ground proved of great service as a place for distributing companies of troops to sort their light baggage and prepare it for disinfection. It could not be used in rainy weather and in such weather work had to be suspended.

In order to enable the Marine-Hospital Service to work with authority in the quarantining of the soldiers at a local station, Passed Assistant Surgeon Cobb obtained the following letter from the mayor of Savannah, which, however, proved scarcely necessary, except as a matter of form :

SAVANNAH, GA., *March 23, 1899.*

SIR: I have requested Dr. Cobb and the officers of the Marine-Hospital Service to inspect and superintend the fumigation of the effects of all Army transports entering this port, so that you may be able to give your attention to the merchant vessels over which they have no control.

This, of course, entitles them to make use of our plant when not necessary for merchant vessels.

Yours, truly,

HERMAN MYERS,
Mayor.

Dr. LINLEY, *Quarantine Officer.*

Assistant Surgeon Foster had already received from the Bureau a decision that the clothing worn by the soldiers, and their persons as well, did not require disinfection, and had received authority to disinfect the heavy baggage by the use of formalin in close boxes and trunks. A routine of procedure was accordingly quickly worked out as the first two or three regiments were put through. The soldiers were brought ashore in detachments in heavy marching order, which means that they carried on their persons their arms, blanket rolls, containing blankets, shelter tents, ponchos, and commonly changes of underclothing, canteens, knapsacks and haversacks, containing small toilet

articles and mess kits. Weapons and other metal articles such as mess kits and canteens were excepted from disinfection. Ponchos, haversacks, and knapsacks, which would be injured by steam, were dipped in bichloride solution. Blankets and underclothing and the like were subjected to steam heat in accordance with the regulation method.

It was found that the light baggage of these companies could always be attended to in one lot, and this was the usual size of the detachments, although occasionally four or even six companies were put through at a time. The companies marched to the open ground beside the disinfecting house, stacked arms, opened ranks, and spread their effects on the ground to sort. They then marched into the disinfecting house in small divisions in charge of their own officers, and placed their blankets and clothing on the racks of the steam cylinder, afterwards reversing this process when the clothes were steamed and ready to be taken away. Tubs of bichloride solution were prepared at one side of the grounds and the companies marched in double file past these to dip the articles requiring this mode of disinfection. Civilians and discharged soldiers coming with the troops could not be handled as easily as the organized companies, but were formed into some kind of squads and put through in practically the same manner.

Colonel Bellinger worked early and late, cooperating with us, and took charge of everything pertaining to the movement of the troops and their baggage, relieving us from responsibility in this, besides furnishing us with an unlimited number of clerks, laborers, and other helpers, and with all necessary tools.

The light baggage which the soldiers carried in heavy marching order served to enable them to go into camp while waiting for their other baggage. They were accordingly transported immediately from the quarantine station to camp elsewhere as soon as they had passed through the process described above. The disinfection of the heavy baggage was more tedious and laborious. This baggage comprised the most wonderful collection of valuable and useless articles I have ever seen. Besides the ordinary luggage which individuals and armies would carry in traveling, it contained knickknacks of every description, monkeys, parrots, and yellow dogs without end, and even a mahogany log, a baby cradle and a pet hog were seen. Early in the beginning of the work a wharf was built in the river about half a mile above the quarantine station, to be used in unloading baggage from the transports. The heavy baggage was put out either on this wharf or on lighters, the travel rations, cooking utensils, and a few other articles, which did not require disinfection, were sorted from it, and put onto separate lighters to be taken away with the regiment, and the remaining baggage was taken on lighters to the station to be disinfected. The laborers were divided into gangs of 5, each gang in charge of a quartermaster's clerk, and as many as could work together were put to disinfecting a lighter load of baggage, under the supervision of 2 medical officers. The boxes and trunks were opened, and the articles removed and sprinkled freely with formalin as they were replaced. Bedding found in the baggage was steamed. After treatment with formalin the baggage was taken to the Gordon Wharf in Savannah and held there under guard until forty-eight hours had expired. Each regiment left a detail to guard the baggage until its disinfection at the station was completed and it was sent away, and they were constantly with it while the work was in operation. The details were limited, so far as possible, to one or two men from each company, besides the commissioned officers commanding them.

In the case of the regiments arriving before April 1, only disinfection was required. From that date on detention of the troops after disinfection was necessary, but the distinction made practically no difference with work at the quarantine station proper, as the detention camp was located elsewhere.

The regiments which arrived before April 1 had not been warned of any quarantine restrictions, or necessity for disinfection of baggage, and took the matter rather unkindly, in some instances causing both the quarantine officers and themselves annoyance and delay. One such regiment was disposed to question the authority under which quarantine was enforced and to resist quarantine measures, and went so far as to propose to take some of the officers' baggage away from the station by force, until they found that they could not get it and themselves transported unless regularly released. This regiment caused us a great deal of trouble and suffered much inconvenience and delay themselves in consequence. There was also a disposition shown by many of the soldiers to make unreasonable charges of loss and damage to baggage in the disinfecting. One soldier made loud outcry about a shirt having been burned in the steam chamber. I went over to him and took it in my hands to examine, and found it entirely unharmed. On another occasion an officer in charge of a detail guarding baggage, complained that a quantity of bedding belonging to his regiment had been left at the Fort Pulaski Wharf where he could not get it, and intimated that it consisted of valuable feather beds and eiderdown quilts belonging to officers. I went over to the wharf and inspected it, and found it to consist of excessively filthy cotton quilts and straw beds and cotton mattresses which had evidently been abandoned as useless, and I took the responsibility of ordering it burned.

For the most part, however, matters went smoothly, particularly after April 1, and the friction was scarcely different from what is always experienced in quarantine work. No case of actual yellow fever was discovered among the sick who reached quarantine. There was a great deal of difficulty in getting at the sanitary history of the regiments on account of the disposition of the regimental surgeons to represent everything at the best under all circumstances. In this they proved themselves not different from others with whom I have had to deal in the course of considerable quarantine experience.

On April 18, the quarantine station was turned over in its entirety to national control and the Marine-Hospital Service, but this made no change in the routine of the work in its relation to the troops. The last of the regiments was finished April 27, and five days later, on May 2, there was a general release from quarantine of those who had been engaged in the work just described. Besides the regular medical officers of the Marine-Hospital Service employed in the work, and Hosp. Steward E. B. Scott, who was assigned to duty at the station, 4 temporary acting assistant surgeons were employed by the Service.

I kept a brief memorandum of the treatment of the various regiments according to the dates on which they passed through quarantine, but as this would not be of interest in a general report and would extend the report too much, I omit it.

Respectfully, yours,

A. C. SMITH,
Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.